

**The Architectural Design Guidelines and Standards for Albemarle Park**

for  
The Historic Resources Commission  
of  
Asheville & Buncombe County

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# Introduction

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## Introduction to the Guidelines

All exterior changes, including renovation and new construction, are subject to design review in the Albemarle Park Local Historic District. This includes any work requiring a building permit as well as any minor maintenance, repair, sign and exterior lighting fixture installation or landscape work that may change the character of the exterior of a building or its site.

These Guidelines provide design principles and standards for historic structures and also for buildings that do not have historic value.

## Use of the Guidelines

The Historic Resources Commission will use these Guidelines in its review process to evaluate all proposed changes.

Its comments and final decision will be based on the guidelines contained herein.

Property owners in Albemarle Park should use these guidelines to determine their basic approach to the rehabilitation and renovation of their property and when developing design concepts for additions and new construction.

Design professionals and contractors should use the guidelines when performing work for their clients in Albemarle Park.

Albemarle Park is recognized as a special place which should be protected as a community resource. It represents a significant part of Asheville's heritage and its unique character is enjoyed by residents and visitors alike.

These guidelines were developed to ensure that the special character of Albemarle Park is preserved.

## A Note About Terminology

The following words in a guideline indicate that compliance is required for approval:

**shall, should, must**

The following words in a guideline indicate that compliance is not required but is highly recommended:

**recommend, suggest, encourage**

The word "inappropriate" is used to describe a design approach that the HRC will not approve.

# The History of Albemarle Park

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Albemarle Park is a landmark in residential planning, architecture and land-scape design that has been recognized to be of national significance.

It is the result of a special collaboration of three prominent men during the 1890s: William Green Raoul, a prominent rail-road executive; Bradford Gilbert, a re-nowned Architect in New York City; and Samuel Parsons, Jr., an important Land-scape Architect.

William Greene Raoul was the President of the Central Railroad of Georgia in 1885 when he began bringing his family to the mountains to escape the hot, humid summers in Savannah. In 1886, he bought

the 35 acre R.W. Deaver Farm just north of the city limits on Charlotte Street with the intention of building a summer place for his family.

However, he was unable to follow through with his plan just then.

Soon after he bought the property, he was elected the President of the Mexican National Railway and circumstances required him to move his family to New York City.

It wasn't until 1897 that attention was once again paid to the "Asheville place."

By this time, Mr. Raoul had decided to develop the property and create a "residential park," with an English inn, housekeeping cottages affiliated with the Inn and private residences.

To develop a cohesive plan he drew upon the skills of his friend, Bradford Lee Gilbert, an Architect in New York City with whom he'd already developed a good working relationship. Gilbert specialized in railroad stations and associated railroad structures. He had also designed several inns in the East and large public buildings for trade expositions in Atlanta and Charleston. In 1890, he had designed an imposing mansion on Peachtree Street in Atlanta for the Raouls. (This still stands today and is targeted for rescue by preservation groups in Atlanta.)

Gilbert immediately brought Samuel Parsons, Jr. into the project to develop the site plan and design the landscape.

Samuel Parsons, Jr. was an influential Landscape Architect in New York City and was the Director of New York City Parks. He had been partners with Calvert Vaux early in his career and was one of the founders of the American Society of Landscape Architects.

It was Parsons who developed the master plan for Albemarle Park. He devoted an entire chapter to it in his book, "How to Plan the Home Grounds," published by Doubleday in 1899.

His goal was to develop a "residential park" that took advantage of the hillside site. He sited the Inn and the cottages so that full advantage could be taken of the mountain views. His planting plan emphasized the special quality of the natural landscape and the importance of "shared" viewscapes.

The Lodge was the first building built, in 1897. It was Thomas Wadley Raoul's residence and served as the office for Albemarle Park.

Construction of the Manor began in 1898 and it opened on New Year's Day, 1899. Its success was immediate. In 1903, the wing toward Charlotte Street was added and the Clubhouse was built to supplement the Inn's recreational offerings.

In 1914, the second addition to the Manor was built - the wing at the eastern end of the original building that faces Terrace Road.

## The History of Albemarle Park - continued

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The Manor was the centerpiece, of Albemarle Park. Even before the Manor had been completed, several cottages were also being built. These include Columbus, Clover and Milfoil.

The period of primary historical significance in Albemarle Park was 1897 - 1913, the years when the Raoul family was actively involved in developing and enlarging upon the original plan for Albemarle Park.

The significant buildings constructed during this era in Albemarle Park are shown on a plat outlining the Property of the Albemarle Park Company, registered at the Courthouse with the Register of Deeds Office. By 1913, 24 significant structures had been built. These were:

The Lodge, 1897  
The Manor, 1898 (1903, 1914)  
Clover, 1898  
Columbus, 1898  
Milfoil, 1898  
Shamrock, 1898  
Orchard, 1899  
Clematis (Laurel), 1901  
Clio, 1902  
Galax, 1902  
Cherokee, 1903  
The Clubhouse, 1903  
Rosebank, 1905  
Manzanita, 1906

Crow's Nest, 1906  
Dahlia, 1906  
Daffodil, 1906  
Larkspur, 1906  
Hollyhock, 1907  
Marigold, 1907  
Dogwood, 1910  
Kalmia, 1910  
Fox Hall, by 1913  
Fox Den, by 1913

There were also five other cottages that had been built in Albemarle Park by this time. However, they were all private homes built by the owners on empty lots purchased from The Albemarle Park Company.

These five were: Alva Glen, Brown Bear, Wildfell, Possum Trot and Breezemont.

Bradford Gilbert died in 1911 and a noticeable difference can be seen in the designs of the cottages built following his death. The cottages and buildings that were built after this first phase were more conventional in design and utilized different materials - brick, German "drop" siding and smooth stucco.

In 1913, the Raoul family sought to sell Albemarle Park to E.W. Grove who, according to The Family of Raoul, "was spending money like water." Grove wasn't interested at that time; though, three years later, in 1916, he did buy all of the land

east of Sunset Drive in Albemarle Park, about seven acres, to add to his other holdings in the area.

Additional cottages, private residences and accessory buildings continued to be built up into the 1950s. There are currently 42 primary structures and additional secondary structures such as garages and carports.

Through the years the cottages became year-round homes and the one-time vacation resort grew into a residential neighborhood. The Clubhouse was remodeled into professional offices. The Manor Inn evolved into a residential hotel and closed in 1984.

Even though the emphasis slowly changed from a resort park to a residential neighborhood the original concept outlined in Samuel Parsons' plan was preserved.

Albemarle Park is unique among Asheville's Local Historic Districts. Every single one of its significant structures is still intact and relatively unchanged today.



# Designation as a Local Historic District

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## Why was the Albemarle Park Local Historic District created?

In 1988, the property owners in Albemarle Park began their efforts toward getting their neighborhood designated a Local Historic District.

The primary reason for this was the endangered status of the Manor Inn, the two cottages that accompany it, and the adjoining grounds.

At that time, the Manor had been vacant for 4 years and there was beginning to arise from various corners of the City and the business community the sentiment that it ought to be demolished and replaced with new construction.

Should the Manor have come to be demolished, anything could have been built in its place, as long as all zoning requirements were met.

No review of the project's design nor evaluation of its impact on the neighborhood would have been required. There was no method through which the residents and property owners could have had input on such a massive and potentially dangerous change to their neighborhood beyond the existing group development review that was required for some types of large projects.

In November, 1989, the Asheville City Council designated Albemarle Park a Local Historic District.

## What does Local Historic District Designation do?

Designation as a Local Historic District affords the property owners and residents protection from intrusive and out-of-character additions and modifications to the existing structures and landscape features.

This is accomplished through mandatory review of ALL modifications to the exterior of all structures and landscape features in the district by the Historic Resources Commission of Asheville & Buncombe County, and compliance with the Design Review Guidelines for Albemarle Park.

The Historic Resources Commission has the legal authority to review and regulate proposed changes to the buildings, landscape and archeological resources within the district boundaries.

By such regulation, the City of Asheville and the HRC hope to achieve the following goals:

- 1) Protection of Asheville's heritage;
- 2) Encouragement of the efforts of Albemarle Park residents to conserve the environment of their neighborhood;
- 3) Stabilization of the existing housing stock;
- 4) Retention of the historic character of the building stock by the regulation of alterations;
- 5) Regulation of the design of new structures to assure their compatibility with

the existing housing stock;

6) Enhancement of the neighborhood's special character by the regulation of the landscaping.

7) Protection of the homeowners' and business owners' investments.

## Official Map

An official map, adopted by the Historic Resources Commission, the Planning & Zoning Commission and the Asheville City Council shows the boundaries of the Albemarle Park Local Historic District. The original of this map and an inventory of the properties located in the Albemarle Park Local Historic District are on file at the HRC office in the Asheville City Building.